

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and the remarks below is respectfully requested. Claims 1, 3, 13, 24, and 26-44 are amended. Claims 45-54 are added. Claims 2 and 25 are cancelled. Hence, Claims 1, 3-24, and 26-54 are pending in this application.

I. ALLOWED SUBJECT MATTER

The allowance of Claims 20-23 is appreciated.

II. ISSUES RELATED TO PRIOR ART

A. 102(e) - *SMORODINSKY*

Claims 1, 7-12, 24, 30-35, 43, and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Smorodinsky, U.S. Patent No. 6,496,948 (hereinafter "*Smorodinsky*"). Applicants submit that these claims, as amended, are patentable over *Smorodinsky*.

Independent Claim 1

Claim 2 depended on Claim 1. The Office Action stated that Claim 2 would be allowable if written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In other words, the Office Action stated that the combination of the limitations of Claim 1 and Claim 2 was allowable. Claim 1 has been amended to include all of the limitations of Claim 2. Therefore, amended Claim 1 is allowable for the same reasons that Claim 2 was allowable.

Independent Claims 24, 43, and 44

Each of independent Claims 24, 43, and 44 recites features that are similar to those of Claim 1. Therefore, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons given above in connection with Claim 1.

Claims 7-12, and 30-35

Claims 7-12, and 30-35 depend from, and hence, incorporate all of the limitations of one of independent Claims 1, 24, 43, and 44 discussed above. Therefore, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons given above in connection with Claim 1, 24, 43, and 44. These claims also recite further limitations that render them allowable.

B. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 2-6, 13-19, 25-29, and 36-42 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, into all independent claims, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The objection to claim 2 and 25 are moot since these two claims have been canceled.

Independent Claim 13 and 36

As noted above, the Office Action stated that each of Claims 13 and 36 would be allowable if written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In other words, the Office Action stated that the combination of the limitations of Claim 1 and Claim 13 was allowable and that the combination of the limitations of Claim 24 and Claim 36 was allowable. Claim 13 has been amended to include all of the limitations of Claim 1. Claim 36 has been amended to include all of the limitations of Claim 24. Therefore, each of amended Claims 13 and 36 is allowable as set forth in the Office Action.

Claims 3-6 and 14-19, 26-29, and 37-42

As noted above, the Office Action stated that each of Claims 3-6 and 14-19, 26-29, and 37-42 would be allowable if written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In other words, the Office Action stated that a combination of the limitations of each of Claims 3-6 and 14-19, 26-29, and 37-42 and the

independent claims from which the each of Claims 3-6 and 14-19, 26-29, and 37-42 depended was allowable. The independent claims from which each of Claims 3-6 and 14-19, 26-29, and 37-42 depended have been rewritten to include all the limitations that the Office Action states as allowable. Therefore, each of Claims 3-6 and 14-19, 26-29, and 37-42 is now allowable as set forth in the Office Action.

C. NEW CLAIMS

Independent Claims 51-54

Each of independent Claims 51-54 recites features that are similar to those of Claim 1 or 13 expressed in apparatus format. Therefore, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons given above in connection with Claim 1 or 13.

Claims 45-50

Claims 45-50 depend from, and hence, incorporate all of the limitations of independent Claim 44 discussed above. Therefore, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons given above in connection with Claim 44. These claims also recite further limitations that render them allowable.

III. CONCLUSIONS & MISCELLANEOUS

For the reasons set forth above, all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone relating to any issue that would advance examination of the present application.

A petition for extension of time, to the extent necessary to make this reply timely filed, is hereby made. If applicable, a law firm check for the petition for extension of time fee is enclosed herewith. If any applicable fee is missing or insufficient, throughout the pendency of this application, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any applicable fees and to credit any overpayments to our Deposit Account No. 50-1302.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: December __6__, 2007

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